

**Word notes Sunday 18/4/10 Tony Hodge**  
**Jesus: The Good Shepherd**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: John 10:1-16

This passage is part of the running debate between Jesus and the Pharisees (a political party-turned religious sect) about his identity and authority. Through chapters 8 & 9 Jesus has declared who he is both in metaphor and plainly (eg Jn 8:58,59) to receive a violent reaction when he does. Having healed a blind man in chapter 9 and used the healing to demonstrate the light he came to bring – and the blindness to those that (think they can) see Jn 9:39 Jesus sets up their next question :”are we blind too?”.

In response to the Pharisees’ question Jesus answers with a figure of speech – a picture of Sheep and their Shepherd, as opposed to those who are not the true shepherd and leaves it for them to work out who they might be in the picture. This isn’t just a useful local analogy to a people used to seeing sheep and shepherds but a nod to Old Testament references to God as the Shepherd of Israel (eg Genesis 49:24) and Israel’s appointed leaders as her Shepherds (eg 1 Chron 11:1,2).

Unlike those who seek care of the sheep only for personal gain (thieves) or those appointed by man (hired-hands) or those not in relationship with the flock (strangers), Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, is appointed by God, and knows them just as he and the Father know each other.

To see what the relationship looks like from the sheep’s point of view we read Psalm 23.

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Read John 10:1-16 and list the ways Jesus describes his relationship with the sheep versus that of the thieves and hired-hands (look for what they do, how they act).

Read Psalm 23. List the ways in which the shepherd cares for his sheep.

Discuss how your being a Christian matches up with the lists you’ve made. You might share brief examples of the Lord’s love, provision, support in times of need etc to encourage each other. Perhaps this has not been your experience of God – why might that be?

How do you tell which shepherd is leading you? How can you apply this to all areas of your life - for instance if you tend to check things out on the Internet, how can you identify the good from the bad? What about teaching, information etc that serves itself up as “Christian”, how can you tell if it’s rooted in the Good Shepherd or comes from a “thief” or “hired-hand”?

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Now that the weather should be turning it’s a good time to reach out to others – BBQs, picnics etc maybe cutting grass for neighbours. What can the Cell do to help foster relationships and share the gospel?